CLAIMS

1.   A content usage management device for managing usage of
contents available at a terminal, comprising:
        change-of-time detection means for detecting a
change-of-time event at a terminal which uses the contents;
and
        control means for updating limitation-on-usage
information about the contents in accordance with the detected
change of time.

2.   The content usage management device according to claim
1, further comprising:
        content storage means for storing the contents; and
        limitation-on-usage information storage means for
storing the limitation-on-usage information about the
contents.

3.   The content usage management device according to claim
1, wherein the limitation-on-usage information includes
expiration date information showing an expiration date by which
the contents can be used.

4.   The content usage management device according to claim
3, further comprising:

data communications means for transmitting and receiving data to and from the terminal which uses the contents,

wherein, when the contents are acquired,

the data communications means transmits and receives data to and from a content distributor which distributes the contents, acquires a remaining time of validity of the contents from the content distributor, and acquires a current terminal time from the terminal; and

the control means adds the remaining time of validity to the current terminal time, to thus compute the expiration date.

5. The content usage management device according to claim 4, wherein the control means compares the current terminal time acquired from the terminal with the expiration date, to thus determine whether or not the contents are usable.

6. The content usage management device according to claim 4,

wherein, when the change-of-time detection means has detected a change-of-time event of the terminal,

the control means subtracts a current terminal time achieved immediately before change of the terminal time from the expiration date, to thus compute a remaining time of validity achieved immediately before change of the terminal time, and

adds the remaining time of validity achieved immediately before change of the terminal time to the current time of the terminal achieved immediately after change of the terminal time to thus compute an expiration date achieved immediately after change of the terminal time, thereby updating limitation-on-usage information.

7. The content usage management device according to claim 6, wherein, when the change-of-time detection means has detected a change-of-time event of the terminal, the data communications means acquires from the terminal a current time thereof achieved immediately before change of time of the terminal and a current time of the terminal achieved immediately after change of time of the terminal.

8. The content usage management device according to claim 1, further comprising:

data communications means for transmitting and receiving data to and from the terminal which uses the contents; and

a storage section having content storage means for storing the contents and limitation-on-usage information storage means for storing information about limitations on usage of the contents, and being configured so as to be removably attached to the terminal,

wherein, when the storage section is attached to the

terminal,

the data communications means transmits and receives data to and from a content distributor which distributes the contents and acquires from the content distributor a remaining time of validity of the contents; and

the control means adds the remaining time of validity to a current time of the terminal, to thus compute the expiration date, and stores the expiration date into the limitation-on-usage information storage means.

9. The content usage management device according to claim 8, wherein the data communications means acquires from the terminal a current time thereof when the storage section is attached to the terminal.

10. The content usage management device according to claim 1, wherein the limitation-on-usage information includes expiration date information showing an expiration time by which the contents can be used and reference time information showing a reference time which serves as a reference for limitations on usage of the contents.

11. The content usage management device according to claim 10, further comprising:

data communications means for transmitting and receiving

data to and from a terminal which uses the contents,

wherein, when the contents are acquired,

the data communications means transmits and receives data to and from a content distributor which distributes the contents, acquires a remaining time of validity of the contents from the content distributor as the expiration date, and acquires from the terminal a current time thereof as the reference time.

12. The content usage management device according to claim 11, wherein the control means subtracts the reference time from the current time of the terminal acquired thereof to thus compute a time during which the contents have been used, and compares the time during which the contents have been used with the expiration time, thereby determining whether or not usage of the contents are usable.

13. The content usage management device according to claim 11,

wherein, when the change-of-time detection means has detected a change-of-time event of the terminal,

the control means computes a time during which the contents have been used, by means of subtracting the reference time from the current time of the terminal, computes an expiration date achieved immediately after change of the time of the terminal by means of subtracting the time during which the contents have

been used from the expiration time achieved immediately before change of time of the terminal, and updates limitation-on-usage information by means of taking the current time of the terminal achieved immediately after change of the time of the terminal as a new reference time.

14.   The content usage management device according to claim 13, wherein, when the change-of-time detection means has detected a change-of-time event of the terminal, the data communications means acquires from the terminal a current time thereof achieved immediately before change of time of the terminal and a current time of the terminal achieved immediately after change of time of the terminal.

15.   The content usage management device according to claim 1, further comprising:
     data communications means for transmitting and receiving data to and from the terminal which uses the contents; and
     a storage section having content storage means for storing the contents and limitation-on-usage information storage means for storing information about limitations on usage of the contents, and being configured so as to be removably attached to the terminal,
     wherein, when the contents are acquired,
     the data communications means transmits and receives data

to and from a content distributor which distributes the contents, and acquires from the terminal a current time thereof achieved at the time of acquisition of contents; and

wherein, when the storage section is attached to the terminal,

the data communications means acquires from the content distributor a current time thereof achieved at the time of attachment of the storage section; and

the control means subtracts the current time of the content distributor achieved at the time of acquisition of the contents from the current time of the content distributor achieved at the time of attachment of the storage section to thus compute a time during which the contents have been used until attachment of the storage section, subtracts the time during which the contents have been used from a previous expiration date stored in the limitation-on-usage information storage means to thus compute an expiration date achieved after attachment of the storage section, and stores the expiration date into the limitation-on-usage information storage means.

16. The content usage management device according to claim 15,

wherein, when the storage section is attached to the terminal,

the data communications means acquires from the terminal

a current time thereof; and

the control means stores the acquired current time of the terminal in the limitation-on-usage information storage means as a reference time achieved after attachment of the storage section.

17.   The content usage management device according to any one of claims 1 through 16, further comprising:

current time acquisition means for independently acquiring from the terminal a current time thereof.

18.   A memory card device having a content usage management function, comprising:

content storage means for storing contents available at a terminal;

limitation-on-usage information storage means for storing limitation-on-usage information about the contents;

data communications means for transmitting and receiving data to and from the terminal which uses the contents;

change-of-time detection means for detecting a change-of-time event of the terminal; and

control means for updating limitation-on-usage information about the contents in accordance with the detected change of time.

19.   A portable terminal apparatus having a content usage management device for managing usage of contents which are available on a terminal, comprising:

change-of-time detection means which detects, as the content usage management device, a change-of-time event of the terminal which uses the contents; and

control means for updating limitation-on-usage information about the contents in accordance with the detected change of time.

20.   The portable terminal device according to claim 19, further comprising:

display means for displaying the updated limitation-on-usage information.

21.   A method for managing usage of contents which are available at a terminal, comprising:

a step of detecting a change-of-time event of a terminal which uses the contents; and

a step of updating limitation-on-usage information about the contents in accordance with the detected change of time.

22.   A program for causing a computer to execute the respective steps of the method for managing usage of contents defined in claim 21.